

CLAIMS

1. An information retrieval system that serves to retrieve information
5 requested by a client machine from a remote server via a network, the client
machine operating a network browser, said system comprising:

an intermediate server coupled to the network, said intermediate
server receives requests destined for the remote server and performs
processing on responses to the requests from the remote server before
10 returning the responses to the client machine; and

at least one third-party application plug-in installed on said
intermediate server, said third-party application plug-in rendering at least one
feature available at the client machine without counterpart plug-ins at the
client machine.

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2. An information retrieval system as recited in claim 1, wherein said
third-party application plug-in operates at said intermediate server operates to
process the responses to the requests from the remote server before
returning the responses to the client machine.

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3. An information retrieval system as recited in claim 1, wherein said
third-party plug-in operates at said intermediate server to pass the responses
to the requests from the remote server through a application filter provided by
said third-party application plug-in before returning the responses to the client
25 machine.

4. An information retrieval system as recited in claim 1, wherein said information retrieval system further comprises:

a data storage device operatively connected or within said intermediate server; and

5 a cookie manager operable on said intermediate server, said cookie manager operates to manage centralized storage of cookies in said data storage device with respect to the client machine and the remote server,

wherein cookies from the remote server provided with a response are stored in said data storage device by said cookie manager instead of at the client machine, and

10 wherein said cookie manager retrieves previously stored cookies from said data storage device that are associated with the remote server and the client machine, and provides the retrieved previously stored cookies to the remote server with the request.

15 5. An information retrieval system as recited in claim 1, wherein said information retrieval system further comprises:

a data storage device operatively connected or within said intermediate server; and

20 a history manager operable on said intermediate server, said history manager operates to manage centralized storage of previously requested resources in said data storage device with respect to the client machine.

6. An intermediary server system, comprising:

25 a web server that receives requests for resources from client machines via a network;

a HTTP handler operatively connected to said web server, said HTTP handler receives the requests for resources, modifies the requests to be directed to appropriate remote servers via the network, and forwards the modified requests for resources to the appropriate remote servers; and

5 a HTML parser operatively connected to said HTTP handler, said HTML parser receives the resources supplied by the appropriate remote servers in response to the modified requests, and modifies the resources such that at least certain links contained therein are modified to be directed to said intermediary server system instead of remote servers.

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7. An intermediary server system as recited in claim 6, wherein said intermediary server system further comprises:

a session manager that manages sessions between the client machines or their users and said intermediary server system;

15 a server information manager that manages remote server supplied identification or state information provided to said intermediary server system by remote servers; and

a data store for storage of session management data provided by said session manager and remote server supplied identification or state
20 information provided by said server information manager.

8. An intermediary server system as recited in claim 7, wherein the remote server supplied identification or the state information provided by said server information manager comprises "cookies".

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9. An intermediary server system as recited in claim 6, wherein said intermediary server system further comprises:

a history manager, said history manager operates to manage storage and retrieval of resources previously requested by particular the client machines or their users.

- 5 10. An intermediary server system as recited in claim 6, wherein said intermediary server system further comprises:

an application plug-in framework that facilitates incorporating application plug-ins within said intermediary server system so as to provide additional functionality.

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11. A method for processing resource requests received at an intermediary server via a network, said method comprising the acts of:

(a) receiving, at the intermediary server, a resource request from a requestor, the resource request requesting a particular resource;

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(b) determining a hostname for a remote server hosting the particular resource being requested;

(c) sending a request for the particular resource to the remote server based on the determined hostname;

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(d) receiving, at the intermediary server, a response to the request from the remote server;

(e) modifying the response so that links within the response point to the intermediate server; and

(f) sending the modified response to the requestor.

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12. A method as recited in claim 11, said method further comprises the acts of:

(g) centrally saving the modified response such that the modified response is able to be subsequently recalled by the requestor.

13. A method as recited in claim 12, wherein said saving (g) saves the
5 modified response in the central storage.

14. A method as recited in claim 11, wherein the resource request is a HTTP request including at least a URL having an initial hostname for the particular resource.

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15. A method for processing a resource requested received at an intermediary server via a network, said method comprising the acts of:

(a) receiving, at the intermediary server, a resource request from a requestor;

15 (b) determining an address for a remote server hosting the requested resource;

(c) retrieving at least one cookie associated with the remote server from a central storage associated with the intermediary server;

20 (d) sending a request for the requested resource with the retrieved cookie to the remote server;

(e) receiving, at the intermediary server, a response to the request from the remote server;

(f) storing any cookies provided with the received response in the central storage such that the cookies are associated with the remote server;

25 (g) modifying the response so that links within the response point to the intermediate server; and

(h) sending the modified response to the requestor.

16. A method as recited in claim 15, said method further comprises the acts of:

(i) saving the modified response to the central storage such that the modified response is associated with the requestor.

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17. A method as recited in claim 15, wherein the resource request is a HTTP request including at least the at least one cookie, and a URL having an initial hostname for the particular resource.

10 18. A computer readable medium including at least computer program code for processing resource requests received at an intermediary server via a network, said computer readable medium comprising:

computer program code for receiving, at the intermediary server, a resource request from a requestor, the resource request requesting a particular resource;

computer program code for determining a hostname for a remote server hosting the particular resource being requested;

computer program code for sending a request for the particular resource to the remote server based on the determined hostname;

20 computer program code for receiving, at the intermediary server, a response to the request from the remote server;

computer program code for modifying the response so that links within the response point to the intermediate server; and

25 computer program code for sending the modified response to the requestor.

19. A computer readable medium as recited in claim 18, said computer readable medium further comprises:

computer program code for centrally saving the modified response such that the modified response is able to be subsequently recalled by the requestor.

- 5 20. A computer readable medium as recited in claim 18, wherein the response from the remote server comprises HTML data.